

OPINION

Simmons Voting Record Is One of Independence

By Todd Mitchell
Chief of Staff, Congressman
Rob Simmons

In his opéd, "Keeping Tabs on Congress," Feb. 5, Mr. William Collins questions Congressman Rob Simmons' willingness to buck the Republican Party in Washington. The official congressional record says otherwise.

The respected and non-partisan publication Congressional Quarterly Magazine recently ranked Simmons among the top 10 most independent Republicans in the entire House of Representatives. The periodical, which is the most widely read vote-tracking reference in Washington, concluded that not only was Simmons in the top 10, but so were fellow Connecticut Reps. Nancy Johnson and Chris Shays.

In standing up for Connecticut on issues such as environmental protection, education and veterans' healthcare, Simmons voted against President Bush more than all but two Republican members, while only seven GOP members voted

against the House Republican leadership more than Rob Simmons.

Here are just a few of Congressman Simmons' independent votes:

- *Simmons was one of just four Republicans to oppose all seven anti-environmental amendments to Interior spending bill.

- *Simmons was one of just four Republicans to oppose consideration of legislation that under-funded the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- *Simmons was one of just six Republican to oppose consideration of the annual Veterans' Affairs spending bill, which under-funded veterans' health care.

- *Simmons was just one of 12 Republicans to oppose the president's Head Start education bill.

- *Simmons was one of 26 Republicans to vote for an amendment that would have that would have limited the Bush administration's effort to privatize federal jobs.

- *Simmons was one of only 15 Republicans to oppose public

school vouchers in Washington, DC.

- *Simmons was one of only 33 Republicans to vote to increase federal spending on the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

- *Simmons was one of only 27 Republicans to vote against the Singapore Free Trade Agreement.

- *Simmons was one of only 14 Republicans to vote three times against opening up the Arctic refuge to drilling.

- *Simmons was one of only 18 Republicans to vote to increase renewable alternative energy programs.

Mr. Collins makes a good point - the public should be aware of the voting records of their elected representatives. But it's also important that the public know all the facts. And the fact is Congressman Rob Simmons will continue to place Connecticut's Second District before party politics.